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**Date:** June 24, 2015



Gregory Bailey, PE  
State Highway Engineer  
West Virginia Division of Highways  
State Capitol Complex, Building 5  
1900 Kanawha Boulevard East  
Charleston, WV 25305-0430

Ref: letter from Mr. Ben Hark dated 11/14/2014

Dear Mr. Bailey:

In response to a letter dated 11/14/2014 from Ben Hark summarizing the November 6-7 workshop, we have the following comments for the four project actions that were discussed:

1) The Build Alternative:

- A). Upon a field visit on April 14, 2015 to inspect the proposed Bridge #3 location over a South Haddix tributary, it was determined that this tributary in question employs a significant contribution to the overall survival of the brook trout population found in this area. Populations of brook trout have been observed upstream of the proposed highway crossing in early spring and in late fall which indicates that this is a vital part of the ecosystem and the upper reach of the tributary must remain connected to the lower reaches of South Haddix run in order not to segregate the population and thus make the areas not viable for brook trout in the future. Because of this, it is the position of the Forest Service to accept Alternative 3D.
- B). We recognize that the West Virginia Department of Highways (WVDOH) will work with us to move the waste area adjacent to Panther Run to minimize impacts to a known location of the blunt-lobe grape fern.
- C). WVDOH still needs to provide us complete digital mapping of the entire Kerens to Parsons alignment being carried forward. We recognize that the WVDOH will provide any future supplemental mapping associated with this project as necessary.



D). A meeting with other agencies in reference to 404 permit mitigation strategies has yet to occur. The Forest Service (FS) recognizes that this will be scheduled in the near future. Furthermore, the FS stresses the desire to have mitigation occur through design, then realized within the local watershed and lastly within the MNF boundary in order to retain mitigation funding on the MNF rather than being directed into the in lieu funding program.

E). Development of Forest Service needs into the RFP is currently underway.

2) Access Points:

I feel that for the most part we are in agreement on access points. There are some minor details that still need to be worked out with the final locations on one or two of them but we are confident that through our ongoing collaboration we can work through these and will finalize prior to the RFP being issued.

3) Trails:

A). At this point, we are agreeable on the location for the two small parking areas/trailheads located north of the Corridor. We are in agreement that the western portion of the Haddix trail along Panther Run is to be abandoned. The eastern portion that leads to the Weaner property is still being discussed to potentially reconnect across H to that portion of trail north of the Corridor.

B). The Forest provided design criteria to the WVDOH on 11/12/2014 (via email)

C). WVDOH shall provide the FS updated mapping to include a larger coverage area of Shingletree trail.

4) Forest Service Biological Evaluation (BE):

The Forest Service BE is complete and we are expected to submit it to the WVDOH no later than June 30, 2015.

Furthermore, we would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the following additional items:

- Soil alkalinity of the material in Haddix watershed needs to be analyzed and tests need to be run on borings to determine the best treatment strategy for this material.
- Timber cruising will need to occur by FS personnel prior to any timber removal on FS lands. We anticipate this taking 5-7 weeks to complete and would require a 6 month lead time notice so we can plan it into our schedule. The 6 month lead time does not include the winter months (December thru March). Also, the boundary shall be marked in the field so our personnel can easily locate the limits of the area to be cruised. A shape file of the boundary shall also be provided. No clearing of trees shall occur prior to payment for the timber.

- The 219 to Parsons segment will require some inventory needs for the trail system and mitigation for FR 933 and Shingletree trail. Now is the time to capture the inventory in anticipation for upcoming discussion on this section. The FS would like consideration for mitigation funding to supplement our staff in order to obtain these inventory needs. A second option would be for the WVDON to hire or designate staff to perform this function. We recognize that the WVDON shall provide mitigation funding due to the alteration of South Haddix trail. This funding will be used by the FS to construct the east and west trail tie-ins to the Corridor.
- We recognize that the WVDON shall provide mitigation funding to construct a trail from the waste area/trailhead, located across from the 219 connector, to the network of trails located near the Shingletree trail area.

We appreciate the continued coordination and the leadership meetings have been beneficial in helping understand the scope of the project. We commend the WVDON for establishing a timeframe and will strive to do our best to work with you throughout this process.

Sincerely,

  
CLYDE THOMPSON  
Forest Supervisor

cc: Ben Hark ✓